



Jon Telles, contracted telephone operations technician, uses an electrical wire wrap gun to connect a phone line to the building cable. Telephone Operations manages more than 8,000 base phone lines.

Others talk, they deliver

by Laura Pellegrino
Sunburst staff writer

Without the 49th Communications Squadron Telephone Operations group, something as simple as ordering a pizza would be difficult. But even more importantly, completing the mission would be nearly impossible.



Brandon Hodges, contracted telephone operations technician, tests a phone line in the frame room.

Telephone Operations handles all of the telephone communication on base, Lewis said. That includes an 8,000 line telephone exchange for the entire wing and all tenant units.

Three military members work with Lewis as quality assurance evaluators to ensure that the contractors properly maintain and repair the system.

When someone tasks a new project, such as additional phone lines being installed, the telephone operations group passes the information to the contractors, who come up with a cost estimate and a solution. As long as the cost is acceptable, contractors are given the freedom to choose how they complete the task.

Once they finish the job, the telephone operations group makes sure the contractor's work was within the base guidelines.

Base operators are also included in the telephone operations group. The base has a contract with the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped, and operators use Braille readers to look up phone numbers.

"A customer calling would never know if they received a sighted or non-sighted operator because the system works so quickly," Lewis said.

Quality assurance evaluators take two phases of training in quality assurance evaluation and go through technical training as well, said Staff Sgt. Lance Mayfield, 49th CS Telephone Operations quality assurance evaluator.

There is a six-week electrical principles and



Photos by Laura Pellegrino

Susan Lewis, telephone operations chief, reviews a map of the man hole duct system.

theory course at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., he said. Then members spend five-and-a-half months learning indoor and outdoor wiring at Shepherd Air Force Base, Texas.

According to Lewis, the most challenging part of the job is keeping up with current technology after

training is complete.

"We must give everyone on base the capability to complete and do their jobs," she said. "Without phones at this base, the mission would be hampered. We wouldn't be able to connect with the outside world."



Staff Sgt. Everett Walton, quality assurance evaluator, installs a four-wire data circuit.



Silvia Delgado, base operator, finds a phone number for a caller using a Braille reader.